

Introduced by Senator Machado

July 11, 2005

Senate Joint Resolution No. 16—Relative to Mad Cow Disease.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 16, as introduced, Machado. Mad Cow Disease.

This measure will urge the President and Congress of the United States to allow private companies to voluntarily meet the requirements of currently closed foreign markets by using approved testing protocols to test cattle. It will also request the President and Congress to take additional steps to improve food safety.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known
2 as “Mad Cow Disease” or BSE, is a degenerative neurological
3 disease that has caused significant economic disruption in other
4 countries; and

5 WHEREAS, In humans, BSE-infected food products can result
6 in a fatal, incurable disease known variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob
7 Disease, and therefore, the existence or spread of BSE in the
8 United States cattle population also poses a potential health and
9 safety threat; and

10 WHEREAS, On December 23, 2003, the first case of BSE in
11 the United States cattle population was discovered, and that meat
12 from this animal eventually contaminated up to 17,000 pounds of
13 food destined for stores and restaurants, including California
14 retailers; and

15 WHEREAS, In April 2004, an animal showing symptoms
16 similar to BSE, and meeting the criteria to be tested by the

1 United States Department of Agriculture’s BSE surveillance
2 program, was instead destroyed and not tested; and

3 WHEREAS, In November 2004, the United States Department
4 of Agriculture (hereafter USDA) declared a potential second
5 United States case of BSE to be negative, despite conflicting test
6 results, and refused to retest samples from that animal; and

7 WHEREAS, Only upon the action of the USDA’s Inspector
8 General did the second potential case receive a retest, seven
9 months later, resulting in a positive result that was confirmed by
10 international laboratories; and

11 WHEREAS, On June 24, 2005, the USDA reversed its earlier
12 announcement, and confirmed the existence of a second positive
13 case of BSE in the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, The actions of the federal government have failed
15 to provide confidence to overseas governments to reopen
16 valuable export markets for United States beef, including the
17 largest markets in Asia; and

18 WHEREAS, The federal government has, in fact, taken active
19 steps to prevent enterprising private companies from meeting the
20 requirements of overseas markets at no cost to the public, thus
21 stifling private innovation and competition; now, therefore, be it

22 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
23 *California, jointly*, That the Legislature of the State of California
24 urges the President and the Congress of the United States to
25 allow private companies to voluntarily meet the requirements of
26 currently closed foreign markets, by testing cattle using approved
27 testing protocols; and be it further

28 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature requests the
29 President and Congress take additional steps to improve food
30 safety, including closing loopholes in cattle feed rules that
31 continue to allow cattle remains to be fed to cattle, and maintain
32 the ban on using “downer” animals for human consumption; and
33 be it further

34 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
35 this resolution to the President of the United States, each Senator
36 and Representative from California in the Congress of the United
37 States, and the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

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